A REVIEW OF THE STATE OF THE BRITISH NATION.

Thursday, February 19. 1708.

I Have been telling you the Injury to Trade by Prohibitions and Reſtrictions; I touch'd at the *Flanders* Prohibition, and I did purpoſe to come to our new-faſhion'd Way of prohibiting Commerce in Caſes of War, and ſo directly to our preſent Prohibition of the *French* Trade, by which, as in the firſt Part of this Work, I have prov'd, we loſe out of Pocket 500000 *l. per Annum*, and ſo fight againſt our ſelves in making War with our Enemies—— A Thing, the Wiſdom of our Neighbours conſider'd of in Time, and took care to remedy it, and I was in Hopes we ſhould have been inſtructed by our Loſſes before now, to have been equally prudent.

But I love to go on, in order we may farther ſee the Inconveniencies of our Prohibitions in Trade, by the daily Application of our People to the Parliament to rectifie them; one of which is now particularly depending before the H... of L... and may perhaps meet with its Deciſion this very Day; I mean the Affair of exporting White-Cloths.

I know, it is alledg'd, that Exporting our Cloths unmanufactur'd, is robbing us of the Labour of the Poor; a Thing in all our Diſcourſes of Manufacturing principally to be conſider'd, as what lies at the Bottom, and is the Soul of our Welfare in Trade— But moſt of our general Rules admit ſome Exception, and this among the reſt, one very conſiderable One, as to White Cloths.

The Dyers are originally the Complainers in ſuch a Caſe, together with ſome of the Workmen employ'd in dreſſing or finiſhing the Cloths; and theſe ſay, they are deprivd

priv'd of their Work, or at leaſt in a great Meaſure diſcourag'd— But here it is to be ask'd,

1. Do not ſome People in foreign Parts dye the Cloth better and cheaper than you can do? If they do, you cannot wonder that they refuſe to have them of our Dying: Now 'tis the well and cheap Performance which forces a Manufacture or Trade, and Prohibitions cannot alter it. Do the *Dutch* refuſe our Cloths dy'd, becauſe they dye them better and cheaper themſelves? Let our Dyers ſo improve their Art as to out-do them, and dye them better and cheaper than the *Dutch*, and inſtead of taking none dy'd, in time they will come to take none white; and if you by ill dying render your Manufacture unmarketable, as it ſeems it is, when it comes to lye by their own; Can any Body wonder or blame the *Dutch* for refuſing them? 'Tis plain, they do not refuſe your Cloth, but your Dyers, and it would be hard, that becauſe your Dyers are Bunglers at their Trade, you ſhould ſupport them at the Expence of your whole Manufacture.

2. But here is another Clauſe unhappily concern'd in this Affair, which makes it abſolutely ridiculous, and that is, that a great Deal of this Cloth is carry'd undreſs'd and undry'd into *Germany* and *France*, and ſeveral Parts of *Europe*; where it is worn white and rough, and never dreſs'd or dy'd at all.—And this is manifeſt in the Articles of *Sur Tout* Coats in *Germany*, eſpecially for Servants and poor People, Cloathing Armies, and Monaſtick Habits of the Religious Houſes; now if we will let none of our Cloths go out white or undreſs'd, what is this but to make an Act of Parliament, that the *Fryers* ſhall change their Habits, or ſhall not be clothed with *Engliſh* Cloth; that the *Pruſſian Sur-Touts* and the *Saxon* Horſe ſhall cloth with no more *Wiltſhire* Whites, and the *Engliſh* of this is, that we are barring out other Nations from our Trade, and prohibiting our *Glouceſterſhire* and *Wiltſhire* People making Cloth.

This is ſo plain, and has been made out ſo clearly, that the Wiſdom of the Nation has moſt ſeaſonably taken it into Conſideration, and nothing has been more ſurprizing to me, than that any Body ſhould appear to oppoſe an Act of ſo viſible Advantage to the Nation.

Nor has this been a new Thing in *England*, we are perhaps one of the beſt Nations in the World to make Laws that do us no good, and neglect thoſe that are for our good when they are made; an Enquiry into either of which Articles would be the keeneſt Satyr any Man in the World could write upon our Country.

I ſhould ſay a great Deal more to this Affair of the White Cloth, but I hope, the Bill for its Exportation being at the Point of paſſing, there will be the leſs Occaſion— I could eaſily make Calculations upon the Multitude of People it employs; the vaſt Extent of Country, and ſome of it the richeſt in *England*, which depends upon it; the whole *Weſtern* Part of *England*, from *Saliſbury* to *Glouceſter*, are in ſome Meaſure to be ſaid to live by it; the great and populous Vales, numberleſs Villages and wealthy Towns, which are in the Tract of Land where this Trade lies, are hardly to be match'd in the Nation, and all, by this ſenſeleſs Interruption of Trade, are at a full Stop, and their Cloth lies by without a Market; wealthy Clothiers have their whole Stocks and Eſtates in Trade lying on their Hands in Goods. Theſe Goods want no Demand, want no Vent; Foreigners want them, almoſt as much as we want to ſell them, and our Officers having found out by their mighty Wiſdom a Law of Prohibition, we will not let them be carry'd to the Market to be ſold.

Were this at a Time, when we had a free and open Trade with all the World beſide, and that our People, generally ſpeaking, were full of Trade, the Grievance would make the leſs Noiſe; but when it falls at a Time, when we ſuffer innumerable Faintings and Convulſions in the other Parts of our Trade, it is doubly unhappy, and adds

to

to the Complication of Diſaſters we now ſtruggle with—— But as violent Diſeaſes prompt the Remedy, I hope, this is near its Cure, and I do not mention it here to diſcourage us—but to make out what I am upon, *viz.* The Miſchief, generally ſpeaking, of our Prohibitions in Trade.

MISCELLANEA.

WELL, Gentlemen, and what think you of my Garbling-Office now? And let us for a while ſuppoſe them in full Commiſſion ſitting at the Work, and who ſhall we bring before them? —Will you begin at the Original of all our Miſchiefs? *And that, I think, is the only Way to render the Work compleat*: And where lies the Original of our Miſchief, *for that will admit Diſpute?* Truly, not ſo much in Who is in, and Who out, as in a Spirit of Strife, Ambition and ſeparate Intereſt, that runs through the whole Nation at this Time.

Now, could we garble this Temper, and reſtore the Ancient *Roman* Principle again in *Britain*; the Principle of dying for our Country, or in *Engliſh*, ſerving our Country, this would be a Work indeed; but there is ſo much Mixture to be garbled out before this can be done, that 'tis like the Propoſal in the Goſpel, *of weeding out the Tares while the Wheat was ſtanding, which would have certainly pull'd up all the Wheat with it.*

Shall we bring Parties to this Garbling-Office, and how would the very Name of Parties be loſt in their Hands, when they ſhould pick out all their Paſſion, all the Cynders of a burnt up Gall, and the Duſt of a Brain calcin'd by the furious Flame of Envy and Ambition—When the Garblers come to ſeparate between gilded Pretences, *a Commodity that looks fair, but is foul and unmerchantable within*, and real Deſigns which lie hid under the Out-ſide Sham of State Policy.

And to begin with the hot Party we have talk'd ſo much of, will you garble out their unmarketable Ware, their corrupted Principles of Perſecution and Paſſive-Obedience? Their SOIL, *as the Spice Merchants call it*, that is, the Dirt of Standal, Railery, Calmour and Reproach, which lies on the Surface of all their Actions? Will you garble them of all their Revolution-Uncleanneſſes, their Abjuration-Defilements, where they have fought againſt their Monarch, and yet pray for his Return, abjur'd his Race, and yet eſpouſe their Quarrel? Will you garble them of all their ill-natur'd Mirth at their Countries Misfortunes, and their awkward unnatural Smiles when our Enemies triumph? Will you pick out their forging of Sham-News, their plotting aſſaſſinating Mixtures, their Memorial, Tacking, Anti-Union Corruptions? Heavens bleſs us from meeting the Spectre in a dark Night, what a Skelleton would a *High-Flyer* thus garbled look like!

Well, and muſt not the *Whigs* be garbled too? Ay, ay, Gentlemen, garble us and welcome, and if you can get out all our Kn——s, *nay, go farther if you can*, and get out all our unmarketable Ware, ſuch as Narrowneſs of Principle, our ſneaking, cenſuring, ill-rewarding, Friend-neglecting, Service-forgetting, King-abuſing Principles, do it and welcome; ay, ay, garble out all our T——-Servers, Malecontents and Sham-Whigs, and you will do us a Favour; we ſhall be the fitter to hold our own againſt *High Flying* Invaſions, and govern *Tories* with more Authority.

But before I go on with this ill-natur'd Allegory, let us ſee, who are fitteſt to be the Garblers; for unleſs you can fix upon that, we ſhall go together by the Ears at the Beginning, and ſo never finiſh the Work. I remember a Story in the late King *William's* Time, of a poor Fellow that was try'd for ſetting the Ship, call'd the *Royal Soveraign*, on Fire; the Thing, it ſeems, was an Accident, however the poor Fellow was hang'd for it, to teach him to take